

COMMENTS ON THE APPLICATION BY DENYS W. TUCKER
CONCERNING "GEMPYLUS SERPENS" CUVIER, 1829
(CLASS PISCES)

(Commission Reference : Z.N.(S.) 923)

(For the proposal in this case see *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 11(9) : 285-288)

- (a) View of the Committee on Zoological Nomenclature of the
American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists

(Extract from a letter dated 14th September 1956)

On 3rd June 1956, I requested the members of the committee on zoological nomenclature of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists to send me their comments on Mr. Denys W. Tucker's application for use of the Plenary Powers to suppress the generic name *Acinacea* Bory de St. Vincent, 1804, and the specific name *notha* Bory de St. Vincent, 1804, for the purpose of making the generic name *Gempylus* Cuvier, 1829, and the name *serpens* Cuvier, 1829, the oldest available names for the genus and species concerned.

I can now report that the members of this Committee are unanimous in their support of Mr. Tucker's application.

NOTE: The following statements prepared by individual members of the Committee referred to above were communicated by its Chairman, Dr. W. I. Follett in his letter from which an extract of the opening portion has been given above.

(i) By **ROBERT RUSH MILLER**

(*University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, U.S.A.*)

I have read the application by Denys Tucker which you recently forwarded and find myself in full agreement with his proposal that the International Commission use its Plenary Powers as requested by him.

Indeed, I am most grateful to Mr. Tucker for going to the trouble and care to point out this situation and asking for a ruling from the Commission.

(ii) By **JAMES A. PETERS**

(*Brown University, Providence, Rhode Is., U.S.A.*)

I have read Mr. Denys W. Tucker's request to the International Commission carefully, and feel that it would be in the best interests of stability in nomenclature to support his proposal. Therefore, I would be in favour of our committee sending a letter indicating our unanimous support of said proposal to the Commission.

(iii) By **DR. JAY M. SAVAGE**

(*University of Southern California, U.S.A.*)

In so far as I can determine from the material presented in the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, I must say that I tend to favour Mr. Tucker's application for conservation of *Gempylus serpens*. If the ichthyological members of the Committee have some arguments to the contrary I would be interested in hearing them. Otherwise I would vote for the application by Tucker.

(iv) By **NORMAN J. WILIMOVSKY**

(Stanford University, California, U.S.A.)

In my opinion we should endorse the requests of Mr. Tucker contained on pages 287-288 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* in using the Plenary Powers in suppressing *Acinacea notha* and placing *Gempylus serpens* on the *Official List* of accepted names.

(v) By **HOBART M. SMITH**

(University of Southern California, U.S.A.)

The application pertaining to *Acinacea notha* has my approval, at least on general principle, although I am not familiar with the precise situation.

(vi) By **DR. W. I. FOLLETT**

(California Academy of Sciences, U.S.A.)

I have heretofore expressed grave doubt as to the advisability of substituting the frequently subjective criterion of usage for the objective and automatic criterion of priority. However, at the 1953 Copenhagen Congress, it was demonstrated that a substantial majority of our colleagues, particularly in Europe, favoured adherence to usage, and pursuant to their mandate I myself participated in the unsuccessful attempts to formulate a so-called "principle of conservation". Mr. Tucker's application involves a situation that might well be governed by such a principle, had it been possible to devise one that was generally acceptable in full detail. Pending further efforts toward this end, in connection with the forthcoming draft of the revised Rules, it would appear that the Plenary Powers afford the only available means of attaining the result that is generally desired in the present case. In furtherance of a uniform philosophy of nomenclature, I therefore vote in favour of Mr. Tucker's carefully prepared application.

(b) By **CARL L. HUBBS**

(University of California)

(Letter dated 5th October 1956)

If it is not too late I wish to offer full support on each of the seven requests made by Denys W. Tucker. I have also been studying this group of fishes, and am rather familiar with the literature thereon. Mr. Tucker has correctly indicated the general usage, and I feel sure that nearly all ichthyologists will favour affirmative action of his requests. Stability in these cases is doubly desirable since the names he favours have gotten into general and popular literature to a considerable extent.

Mr. Tucker has expressed the cases involved in full detail and with sound logic.